

3. Taking AVP Somewhere 'New' **:International Gathering, Aotearoa 2004**

Team: Steve Angell and Elaine Dyer plus 25 participants

Welcome: Building bridges: dance of universal peace

Who is here? Sociometry....

Taken AVP to other countries ..15

Different language settings.....9

Invited AVP to come to your country/community.... 8

Participated in workshops outside your usual community (inc prisons)....all

Lead facilitator..... most

Crisis in workshop difficult to handle... most

Facilitation with only trainees... 4

Gathering... Most important thing for me from this morning's session is...

L&L: Pattern Ball... Steve introduced this exercise.... But the circle was too big, someone dropped out, hadn't paid attention etc... we froze it and looked at the example of an exercise which needed to be either adapted or dropped when being used in a different context... which happens a lot in new situations and internationally.

Introduction to the topic.....

Elaine: Her first experience was of introducing AVP to Aotearoa... powerful experience, was able to travel to the USA after the initial taster which she and Peter had supported Steve to facilitate, and in USA was trained by inmate facilitators at Fishkill Prison. On return, was joined by Steve to take the workshop around the different areas within New Zealand. Began to adapt the language of manual as at times it was not culturally appropriate and added exercises etc which worked better for this setting.

Steve: Language is an important consideration when taking AVP to a new country... have bi-lingual translators who can do simultaneous translation when only a few don't speak trainer's language. Encourage small group discussion etc to be in language of participants... If mostly speakers of another language, 1 or 2 translators will translate to the group and the facilitator

Facilitated discussion and brainstorm:

Process of taking AVP to a new place....

- Envision more than one visit... if not, do several tasters rather than begin the process of training

- Must nurture the organisation beyond 'just' the workshops, ideal if they can be under the care of an existing organisation or committed group.
- Invitation is the key
- Don't be afraid of asking for mentoring support from other trainers who may have had more experience in doing this work.
- Coordinate with existing programmes and other initiatives of AVP (e.g. Uganda, India, Kosovo) Shows need for some form of international coordination... and the confusion and politics created by not checking that you are in relationship with what has already been established. This can leave a lot of problems in the country if these connections are not clear or fair.
- Address guardianship issues... connecting the programme to the international AVP community
- Needs to come in under an established legal organisation in some countries
- Concepts of time / pace / commitment differ from culture to culture
- Availability of time to train also an issue, in some places it is only realistic to run a couple of courses to let integration happen, and not exhaust the trainees. This differs... in Hong Kong an agency had a core group of social workers go through the whole series of courses over three weeks. Trainers were also doing a lot of promotion work
- Cultural sensitivity needed so that exercises can be adapted to be appropriate... don't stay attached too rigidly to the way the exercises are run.
- Initial politeness may not reveal cultural differences that cause tensions... can be resolved as trust and community relationships develop
- Can leave an expectation with less advantaged countries (and prisons) that money is available, foreign travel etc through AVP... be realistic about what AVP involves and don't make promises you can't fulfill
- Issue of sustaining the AVP organisation should be considered before starting... maybe realising that you are entering into a longer term mentoring role with that country.
- Especially in areas of conflict, people want connection with outside world as motivation for inviting AVP- may not lead to sustainability
- Alongside being very experienced in AVP training roles, Facilitators need to be physically hardy... keeping up with the pace, working in unfamiliar and sometimes taxing situations, ready to be an exemplary ambassador for AVP
- Organise time off in between some of the more intense training work, just so to rest and self nurture
- Hidden agendas need to be brought to the surface... leave them at home if they are not healthy! Notice your own prejudices and expectations

- Visiting training team needs to have good trust , communication, conflict resolution processes and working relationships in order to build strong co-facilitators in the new setting, as well as role modeling a clear process
- Consider the wisest use of resources...is it better to take AVP to a new country, or help fund-raise for a couple of trainees to come to your home country to get the basic course, then return with them to mentor them , as together you get things established ?
- Where ever possible, have local people empowered to be part of your team, so that they get the chance to learn the process from the inside, and establish strong relationships with the team for ongoing support. They also give invaluable insights into local and cultural issues.
- Question... is AVP competing with well marketed commercial or religious programmes that may be similar but not as effective?
- Need to be aware of the message sent to other religions when AVP comes through the Quaker/ Christian networks. Important that there are a variety of spiritual and non religious ways of closings, blessings etc in the workshops. Always model inclusiveness.
- Gender issues and modeling equality are important in leadership and also in meeting these differences in other cultural settings
- AVP is a PROCESS.. inviting different cultures and people to bring in the CONTENT
- Share your learnings, and reports of this work with your own countries, of course the place you have been working in, but also internationally through the AVP web page... at least in summary form.

Evaluation in pairs.. what has been useful or interesting for me

Closing... Thumb-thing A significant learning from the workshop, link thumbs, throw into air at end